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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Comic Books Teach Serious Lessons

USAID produces publications that deliver legal rights knowledge



PHOTO: USAID/RLS-I/Cheochi

A school girl reads a USAID information comic book about the illegal use of the traditional conflict resolution practice of *Baad*

USAID has designed and distributed more than 240,000 comic books to strengthen knowledge of the Afghan legal system.

Perhaps the greatest challenges to educating Afghans on their legal rights are an inherent lack of educational legal materials at the local level, and the inability of most people to read them. With a nationwide illiteracy rate of more than 60 percent, getting the message across to Afghans about their legal rights is a daunting task.

To meet these challenges, USAID has developed more than 240,000 information comic books about legal issues important to rural Afghans.

The books were produced with the assistance of localized focus groups and distributed with the help of Community Culture Centers. The booklet "*Alternatives to Baad*" details options to using *baad* - a traditional conflict resolution mechanism whereby girls are handed over in compensation for murders between rival families. More than 40,000 copies of this booklets have been distributed to districts throughout Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces. The "*Alternatives to Baad*" comic book is also being animated for wider viewing on television.

The book "*Encouraging Women to Take Disputes to Jirgas*" explains to women, who traditionally might not seek justice through the legal process, that they have legal rights under the Afghan constitution which can be called upon in a jirga. More than 80,000 copies have been distributed to districts throughout Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces.

"I am afraid that the jirga will ask to take away my daughter in Baad. That is why I am taking these booklets to class with me to teach the context of the book to my students," said a Nangarhar teacher.

There have already been several cases where people and jirgas at the district-level have been enlightened through those publications to make decisions based on the Afghan law and, more importantly, to show equality in justice towards cases that involve women and girls.